Oswald's champion absent

Devoted mother died before exhumation

By Ray Bell
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She was outspoken, at times abrasive, and seldom missed a chance to vehemently maintain that Lee Harvey Oswald did not kill President John F. Kennedy.

So, regardless of the results Sunday, it was unfortunate for history that Marguerite Claverie Oswald, mother of the accused presidential assassin and one of his staunchest defenders, was not present to confirm — or challenge — the conclusions of four pathologists who performed exhaustive tests at Baylor Medical Center following the exhumation.

A year ago, had the situation arisen, Mrs. Oswald likely would have pursued the legal and medical experts through every macabre step.

On Sunday, however, it was not to be.

Marguerite Claverie Oswald, a mother who never stopped defending her son, died Saturday, Jan. 17, 1981.

And, although few of those present Sunday for the exhumation from Fort Worth's Rose Hill Burial Park may have realized it, the grave of Mrs. Oswald is only a few scant feet from that of her son.

Unlike her infamous son, Mrs. Oswald has no tombstone, no marker on her grave.

It was, on Sunday, almost as if she never existed.

But Mrs. Oswald, concerned and carrying the convictions of a mother's devotion, did exist. And despite the evidence, despite the conclusions of the Warren Commission, despite investigations by the Secret Service, the FBI and various police agencies and private groups, she never waivered in her belief.

"Nothing in my investigation shows any involvement of Lee at all," she had said.

"I know my son was framed. Since he died, he was used as a pacifier for the nation."